

Wider 12 Mile benefits office park, city says

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills officials believe a widened 12 Mile will help Arboretum occupants better than lifting a left-turn ban on an access road from the office complex to Drake.

City officials have received letters of complaint and petitions from office park occupants requesting the left-turn ban be lifted to provide easier access to southward travel. But they are still uncertain about a course of action or a response.

"Yes, we've gotten their letters. From my standpoint, this issue was talked about at great length at meetings," said William Costick, Farmington Hills city manager.

Left turns from the access road were banned in the best interest of the community.

"There's no question it's an inconvenience to occupants of the Arboretum. But it was in the best interest of the community to prevent left turns," said Thomas Bissell, Farmington Hills public services director.

The idea was that they go out to 12 Mile and make a safe left turn," Costick said, adding that Halsted

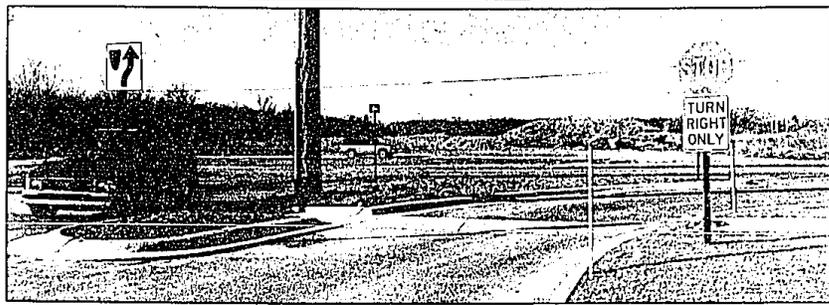
and Haggerty are preferred thoroughfares to be used by employees rather than residential Drake.

WHEN 12 MILE, now two lanes west of Farmington Road, is widened, Arboretum employees will turn right when they exit the office park. They can make left turns at a lighted traffic island, which will prevent employees from taking chances of getting into traffic as they do now, Bissell said.

The office park is on the south side of 12 Mile, just east of Drake. Part of a compromise earlier this year between city officials, Drake residents and Arboretum developers included installation of a traffic light at White Plains and 12 Mile to offset traffic congestion from the office park because of the left-turn ban on Drake.

Receipt of a state grant to allow the first phase of widening on 12 Mile next summer, between Farmington and Drake roads, will delay that traffic light. "It was not done because of the boulevard," Bissell said.

Costick said it may be a good idea to schedule a meeting with office park occupants to explain the 12 Mile widening project and how it will benefit them.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

This is a view of the western entrance/exit at the Arboretum Office Park. This view looks west from the driveway at Drake. The van on the left has just made a right turn from northbound Drake into the driveway.

Workers up in arms over turn bans

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"Our original intent was to minimize traffic. Every facet helps," said Old Homestead resident Ed Kroll. "They (Arboretum employees) are creating the hazard. It's their disrespect for the basic laws of traffic control that's causing the problem."

Drake Road spokeswoman Janet Compo was unavailable for comment.

The left-turn ban is the result of a compromise reached in March between the city, Arboretum developer Peter Burton and Drake residents. The residents agreed to the access

road, providing that traffic volume in the residential area was minimized with the left-turn ban. The access road is at the northern end of the winding, historic stretch.

Employees are faced with several choices. They can exit the Arboretum directly onto 12 Mile, making either a left or right turn. Making left turns across oncoming traffic is what concerns office park occupants. The other choice is exiting from the access road onto Drake and traveling north to the Drake-12 Mile intersection.

"IN MOST instances, those making left turns from the main exit

must pull into the center lane and wait until westbound traffic clears before completing their left turn. These cars are in a precarious position and also block other drivers' vision," according to a letter from occupants to city officials.

"Those who attempt to use the west exit to 12 Mile confront two hazards: there is no center lane, and a hill partially obstructs the view of eastbound traffic," the letter continues.

A "minimal amount" of tickets were given at the access road when an officer was stationed there earlier this year. The 12 Mile-Drake intersection is not considered a high

accident intersection, despite complaints about it, said Sgt. Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills police traffic section.

Burton, the Arboretum developer, agrees with office park occupants.

"I'm empathetic with the community's concern about traffic on Drake. The solution for what they perceive as a problem is not helping. They (city officials) are not necessarily responding to reason in this case."

Burton said a survey of Arboretum occupants will be conducted to determine how employees are exiting the office park and what effect or problems it is causing.

20 waive exams in cocaine case

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have operated over a five-year period from 1983-85.

Defendants received letters from the state attorney general in November, telling them to appear on the criminal charges. The indictments followed 18 months of police investigation by the Livonia-based Southeast Michigan Conspiracy Organization, or SEMCO.

UNDER AN agreement with prosecutors, 20 defendants are expected to plead guilty to charges of conspiracy to possess cocaine, a felony that carries a maximum penalty of four years in prison, said SEMCO pro-

secutor Eric Kaiser, serving as a special assistant attorney general on these cases. Some had faced up to 20 years in prison on the original charges.

Area residents who waived their rights to examination include: Dennis Chalkin, 44, and Elaine Norling, 33, both of Farmington Hills; Donald German, 37, and Gary Matychie, 43, both of Livonia; Jody Astrelin, 31, of Birmingham; James Gow, 36, a former Farmington Hills resident who lives in Redford Township; Charles Schatz, 38, of Redford Township; Richard Hein, 29, of Rochester.

A key source for investigators in the case was Arthur Sterling Abrams, a former Farmington Hills resident who lived on Silwassee near Tuck until his arrest on drug charges in December 1987. In March, Judge Andrews sentenced him to 5 years' probation following a guilty plea to cocaine conspiracy charges.

In a 27-page federal grand jury

drug indictment announced in February, he is mentioned repeatedly as a person selling or arranging the sale of cocaine to many of the defendants in the case. Investigators described him as an undicted co-conspirator.

The case was brought through the Farmington-area court, because some of the drug distributors were from that area, Kaiser added.

44 make all-A's at Harrison

See related story on Page 5B

Forty-three Farmington Hills Harrison High students were lauded for earning a 4.0 grade point average during the district's first marking period.

They include:

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- 10th grade — Frank Ankawi, Nicholas Budor, Deron Cook, Paul Gilyvdis, Janine Kehl, Par Johon

Larsson, Julie McGlennen, Charles Orstein, Ben Pinsky, Julia Ritter, Patrick Rowland, Stevanie Sprague, and Anthony Swiastky.

- 11th grade — Jason Brantigan, Bethany Broadwell, Rebecca Hoyt, Katherine Kirsten, Matt Lange, Jill Murany, Andrew Rick, Jayson Schwalm, Melissa Teachman and Justin Timblin.
- 12th grade — Jennifer Allan, Dana Apfelblat, John Chuhran, Millard Coleman, Lori Fox, Jared Goganger, Lisa Kates, Sin-Mei Kim, Michelle Lee, Sarah McIntosh, Todd Rope, William Spillius and Jenay Willer.

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